

Empowerment as a Catalyst for Ethical Behaviour in Financial Organizations

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.38177/AJBSR.2025.7205>

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Article Received: 13 March 2025

Article Accepted: 21 May 2025

Article Published: 28 May 2025

ABSTRACT

Empowerment as a multidimensional construct comprises psychological and structural dimensions that can shape employees' moral decision-making, accountability, and commitment to ethical standards. The study shows that empowerment increases organizational morality, reduces misconduct, and increases employee morale. Based on data collected from various financial institutions, the study finds that organizations that promote empowerment within their ranks achieve the highest levels of ethical behaviour and regulatory compliance. Moreover, the study demonstrates that organizational culture not only acts as a significant mediator but also further strengthens the influence of empowerment on ethical behaviour. The results provide actionable insights for financial institutions to use empowerment to achieve sustainable, ethical results. This study contributes theoretically and practically by addressing gaps in the literature on empowerment and ethical behaviour, especially in financial organizations. It introduces a model to conceptualize the relationship between organizational culture, empowerment, and ethical behaviour. Psychological and structural empowerment are intertwined and impact ethical decision-making differently, with long-term implications for organizational performance. We recommend future studies beyond empowerment's longitudinal effects and cross-sector applicability.

Keywords: Ethical Behaviour; Financial Organizations; Organizational Integrity; Employee Accountability; Organizational Culture; Psychological Empowerment; Structural Empowerment; Leadership; Organizational Citizenship; Decision-Making; Workplace Ethics.

1. Introduction

The importance of ethical behaviour in the financial sector because financial decisions can have a profound and far-reaching impact on society and the economy. Therefore, ethical practices must be followed to ensure trust and sustainability. Recent appeals to a regulatory turkey shoot post-scandal/turmoil have newly emphasized an anthropology of healthy, ethical behaviour beyond avenues and limits of regulation. A strategy for promoting ethical behaviour with great potential is empowerment or providing employees with decision-making autonomy and resources. Align systems and processes with organizational values and highlight how leaders play an important role in creating an ethical culture. Some practical strategies are challenging authority, encouraging discourse, valuing positive emotions, and rewarding ethical behaviour (Fichter, 2018).

Often, financial professionals get caught up in ethical dilemmas stemming from conflicts of interest, insider trading, etc. This requires acknowledging the importance of understanding the ethical challenges and creating a plan to facilitate ethical decision-making (Svoboda, 2024). Trust needs hypothetical justness, wherein banks [to retain trust] need to balance the interests of different stakeholders in a system, and [all the essential parties] will find that their interests are protected and determined by some ethical norms.

The Banking Code of Ethics' improvements and emphasis on customer interests can assist the public with growing confidence in the financial sector (Ionaşcu, Barbu, & Popa, 2023). Banking ethics can bring customer loyalty and brand support from stakeholders. Ethical banking encompasses transparency, fairness, and corporate social responsibility (Mihai, 2024). Ethical leadership minimizes knowledge-hiding behaviour and fosters meaningful work that enhances organizational innovation and creativity (Mohsin, 2021).

Workplace empowerment entails psychological aspects and structural factors that foster an atmosphere where ethical conundrums can be tackled. Psychological empowerment contributes to an individual's meaningfulness, responsibility, and impact, while structural empowerment enables access to resources, information, and authority. Psychological and structural empowerment are key factors when creating a workplace where employees can address ethical dilemmas. Thus, psychological empowerment acts as an important mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership and positive employee outcomes, and structural empowerment lays the necessary groundwork for psychological empowerment to flourish. Together, they increase job satisfaction and creativity and decrease ethical conflicts, creating a more engaged and committed workforce.

1.1. Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment mediates ethical leadership and various positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and creativity. It fully mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment and partially mediates the relationship with job satisfaction (Qing et al., 2020). It also mediates the effect of ethical leadership on creativity (Javed et al., 2017) and work engagement (Ahmad & Gao, 2018). Psychological empowerment is a motivational mechanism linking ethical leadership with employee success. However, emotional exhaustion can diminish its empowering effects (Dust et al., 2018). Psychological empowerment negatively correlates with ethical conflict, suggesting it can help reduce ethical dilemmas in nursing (Liu, Zhang, & Jin, 2022).

1.2. Structural Empowerment

Structural empowerment is significantly associated with psychological empowerment, particularly in nursing. It contributes to positive work behaviours and attitudes, enhancing job satisfaction and retention (Wagner et al., 2010). Organizational Strategy: Creating an environment that provides structural empowerment is crucial for fostering psychological empowerment, leading to a more effective and innovative workforce (Wagner et al., 2010).

Empowerment in financial organizations can significantly influence ethical behaviour by aligning individual decision-making with organizational values and enhancing competitiveness. This response explores how empowerment fosters ethical conduct in financial institutions. Empowering front-line employees with decision-making authority and autonomy can enhance competitiveness and profit-oriented behaviour, indirectly supporting ethical practices by aligning employee actions with organizational goals (Nielsen & Pedersen, 2003). Creating an ethical culture through empowerment involves aligning systems and processes with organizational values. It includes challenging authority, creating opportunities for discourse, and rewarding ethical behaviour, which helps bridge the gap between formal ethical standards and actual practices (Fichter, 2018).

Empowerment can facilitate ethical decision-making by allowing employees to reflect on and address ethical issues daily. It is crucial in high-risk environments where discrepancies between formal standards and informal practices may arise (Fichter, 2018). Empowerment fosters a sense of collective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), key mediators between corporate ethics and firm performance. These processes help integrate ethical behaviour into the organizational fabric (Chun et al., 2013).

A culture that emphasizes transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making can enhance the positive effects of empowerment on ethical behaviour. A well-functioning organizational culture motivates employees to perform better and engage in ethical work behaviour. This is particularly evident in sectors like healthcare, where ethical standards are crucial for interactions with patients and their families (Lee, 2020). Ethical leadership is positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour and innovative behaviour, with psychological empowerment acting as a mediator. This suggests that ethical leadership can foster an environment where empowerment leads to ethical and innovative behaviours (Shah & Hussain, 2022; Qing et al., 2020). The fit between an individual's values and the organization's culture (person-organization fit) can moderate the relationship between ethical culture and ethical intent, enhancing organizational citizenship behaviour (Ruiz-Palomino & Martínez-Cañas, 2014). High-performance managerial practices also strengthen the effect of ethical leadership on psychological empowerment, further promoting organizational citizenship behaviour (Sarwar et al., 2023). Managers play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture by fostering trust, empowerment, consistency, and mentorship. These elements are essential for creating a positive workplace environment that supports ethical behaviour and employee satisfaction (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006).

1.3. Study Objectives

This study contributes to the existing literature by:

- 1) Examining the dual dimensions of empowerment in fostering ethical Behaviour within financial organizations.
- 2) Identifying organizational culture as a mediator that strengthens the empowerment-ethics relationship.
- 3) Providing actionable insights for practitioners to design empowerment initiatives that enhance ethical outcomes.

The following sections outline the theoretical foundations, methodology, and findings of this study, culminating in a discussion of its implications for theory and practice.

2. Literature Review

Empowerment is a critical concept in organizational behaviour, often linked to enhancing employee motivation, satisfaction, and ethical decision-making. It is generally categorized into psychological and structural empowerment, each playing distinct roles in organizational settings.

2.1. Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is a set of motivational cognitions shaped by the work environment, reflecting an individual's active orientation to their work role. It has four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Pan, 2019; Elloy, 2012; Arogundade & Arogundade, 2015). These dimensions collectively contribute to an employee's intrinsic motivation and satisfaction (Pan, 2019; Elloy, 2012). Psychological empowerment has positively influenced employee outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement. It mediates between leadership behaviours and employee attitudes, enhancing job satisfaction and commitment (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011; Rayan, Sebaie, & Ahmed, 2018). Additionally, it is linked to increased career satisfaction and reduced job-related strain (Arogundade & Arogundade, 2015; Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997).

2.2. Structural Empowerment

Structural empowerment involves providing employees access to resources, information, and support, enabling them to perform their roles effectively. It is crucial to foster an environment where employees feel empowered to make decisions and take initiative (Elloy, 2012; Arogundade & Arogundade, 2015). Structural empowerment is essential for ethical conduct, providing employees with the necessary resources and authority to act ethically. This form of empowerment is significant in organizations where ethical decision-making is critical (Elloy, 2012).

2.3. Empowerment in Financial Organizations

Research Gap: While empowerment has been extensively studied in various organizational contexts, limited research focuses explicitly on financial organizations. This gap presents an opportunity for further exploration to understand how empowerment can be effectively implemented in such settings to enhance ethical decision-making and employee motivation (Pan, 2019; Elloy, 2012).

2.4. Challenges and Future Directions

The effectiveness of empowerment strategies can vary based on cultural and organizational contexts. For instance, the applicability of empowerment scales and models may differ across regions, necessitating localized studies to validate these tools (Chan, Nadler, & Hargis, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2023). Future research could explore the integration of empowerment with different leadership styles to maximize its benefits. Understanding how leadership behaviours influence empowerment can help tailor strategies to specific organizational needs (Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2011; Rayan, Sebaie, & Ahmed, 2018).

2.5. Theoretical Contribution

The study proposes a framework integrating empowerment and ethical behaviour, suggesting that psychological and structural empowerment enhance moral courage, ethical decision-making, and accountability, thereby reducing unethical practices.

2.6. Psychological Empowerment and Moral Courage

Psychological empowerment is positively correlated with moral courage, as seen in studies involving nurses, where it enhances their ability to cope with ethical challenges and improves patient care quality (Wang et al., 2024; Khoshmehr et al., 2020). Ethical leadership significantly boosts psychological empowerment, which in turn mediates the relationship between leadership and moral courage, indicating that empowered individuals are more likely to exhibit moral courage (Wang et al., 2024; Qing et al., 2020).

2.7. Structural Empowerment and Ethical Standards

Structural empowerment, which includes access to resources, support, and information, is linked to psychological empowerment and positive work behaviours, such as job satisfaction and personal initiative (Wagner et al., 2010; Orgambidez et al., 2024; Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020). It provides the necessary tools and authority for individuals to adhere to ethical standards, fostering an environment conducive to ethical behaviour (Wagner et al., 2010; Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Singh & Sankar, 2019).

2.8. Empowerment and Accountability

Structural and psychological empowerment fosters a culture of accountability by enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behaviour (Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Singh & Sankar, 2019). This culture of accountability is crucial in reducing unethical practices, as empowered employees are more engaged and committed to ethical standards (Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Monje-Amor et al., 2021).

2.9. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship between empowerment and ethical Behaviour in financial organizations. It identifies the mediating role of organizational culture and the distinct effects of psychological and structural empowerment.

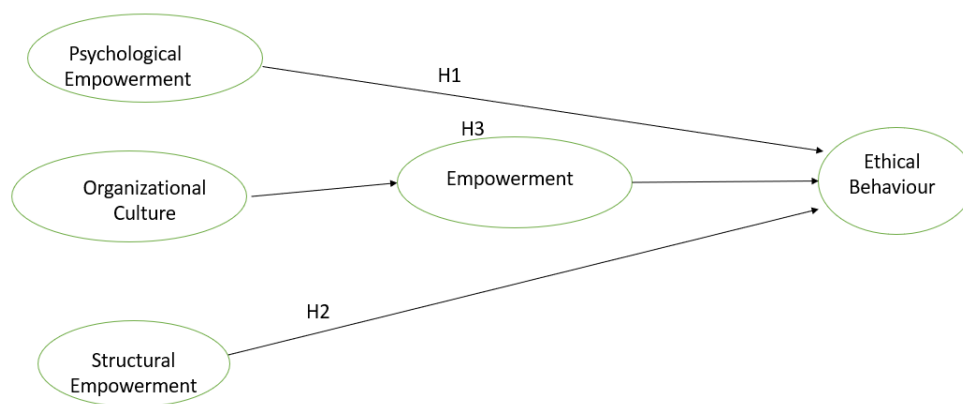


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study explores the relationship between empowerment and ethical behaviour in financial organizations. This involves quantitative surveys and qualitative semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive insights. Ethical leadership significantly influences psychological empowerment, which in turn affects various employee outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), work engagement, and job satisfaction (Sarwar et al., 2022; Ahmad & Gao, 2018; Qing et al., 2020; Shah & Hussain, 2022; Sattar et al., 2020). Psychological empowerment acts as a mediator in these relationships, enhancing the positive effects of ethical leadership on employee behaviour and attitudes.

High-performance managerial practices and power distance orientation can moderate the effects of ethical leadership. For instance, high-performance practices enhance the impact of ethical leadership on empowerment and OCB, while power distance orientation can mitigate these effects (Sarwar et al., 2022; Ahmad & Gao, 2018). Empowerment through ethical leadership reduces negative behaviours like knowledge hiding and promotes positive behaviours such as innovative work behaviour and organizational commitment (Mohsin et al., 2021; Shah & Hussain, 2022; Sattar et al., 2020). Empowerment also helps bridge the gap between formal ethical standards and actual practices within organizations (Fichter, 2018). Creating an ethical culture involves aligning systems and processes with organizational values and promoting ethical leadership styles. This alignment helps in reducing unethical behaviours and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity (Fichter, 2018).

3.1. Quantitative Component

The structured survey instrument measures key organizational variables such as psychological empowerment, structural empowerment, organizational culture, and ethical behaviour. These constructs are crucial for understanding various organizational dynamics and employee outcomes. Psychological Empowerment refers to an individual's perception of their ability to influence their work environment and outcomes. It is often linked to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behaviour (Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Singh & Sarkar, 2019; Monje-Amor et al., 2021).

Structural Empowerment involves the organizational structures and processes that enable employees to access information, resources, and support. It is strongly correlated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction and enhances psychological empowerment (Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Singh & Sarkar, 2019; Monje-Amor et al., 2021).

Ethical leadership and supportive organizational culture can enhance psychological empowerment, which in turn positively affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Qing et al., 2020; Dust et al., 2018; Singh & Singh, 2019).

3.2. Survey Methodology

Validated Scales: The survey uses established scales, such as Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale and Treviño et al. Ethical Behaviour Scale, which ensures reliability and validity in measuring these constructs.

Sampling and Administration: The survey was conducted across 20 financial organizations in Bangladesh, with stratified random sampling ensuring diverse representation across different hierarchical levels and functions. A total of 500 responses were collected. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across hierarchical levels (e.g., staff, managers, executives) and organizational functions.

3.3. Implications

Empowerment and Performance: Both psychological and structural empowerment are critical for enhancing organizational performance. They are linked to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behaviour (Fragkos, Makrykosta, & Frangos, 2020; Singh & Sarkar, 2019; Monje-Amor et al., 2021).

Role of Leadership: Leadership styles, particularly ethical and empowering leadership, play a significant role in fostering psychological empowerment, which mediates various positive employee outcomes (Qing et al., 2020; Dust et al., 2018; Schermuly et al., 2022).

A structured survey instrument was designed to measure the key variables, including psychological empowerment, structural empowerment, organizational culture, and ethical behaviour. The survey items were adapted from validated scales such as Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale (1995) and the Ethical Behaviour Scale by Treviño et al. (2006). Respondents rated their agreement with statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.4. Qualitative Component

To gain deeper insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 participants selected from the survey respondents. The interview guide focused on exploring:

- Participants' perceptions of empowerment within their organizations.
- Examples of ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes.
- The role of organizational culture in shaping ethical Behaviour.

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. Open coding was used to identify recurring themes, which were then categorized into broader patterns.

4. Data Integration

Mixing quantitative and qualitative data in research helps to ferret out general trends and contextual depth of complex phenomena. This is being leveraged across domains, from clinical trials to social sciences to public health, to strengthen the rigour and insights of such studies. Integrating quantitative and qualitative data can provide insights into the heterogeneity of outcomes, mechanisms of interventions, and how to tailor therapies to patient preferences (Richards et al., 2029; Nosulenko, 2021). The prospect of jointly exploring high-dimensional data allows for generating new hypotheses and insights (Muller et al., 2021). Combining different types of evidence, mixed-methods reviews offer comprehensive insight into complex phenomena, but transparency and consistency in their conduct are still challenging (Hong et al., 2017).

Merging qualitative and quantitative paradigms is complicated by their fundamental differences, making it difficult to find a conceptual framework that allows for a compelling combination (Carroll & Rothe, 2010; Antosz et al., 2022). This is more like structured interviews, questionnaires for quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews for qualitative data. However, the mixed-methods rationale does not always match the application (Bryman, 2006). Iterating between data sources is common in successful integration, combining multiple data sources that shaped the research trajectory and triangulated findings (Shekhar et al., 2019). Frameworks such as the Dual Analysis framework or synthesis designs could help researchers navigate the integration process (Muller et al., 2021; Hong et al., 2017). For replicability and understanding, transparent reporting and transparency in the integration process are important (Hong et al., 2017; Hands, 2021). Doing so might be incomplete if dominated by either qualitative or quantitative data at the expense of the other since both dimensions contribute meaningful information about the research outcomes (Tapio et al., 2011).

4.1. Ethical Considerations

Research involving human participants must be conducted ethically, a vital part of science, ensuring that the rights and welfare of the participants are protected. Informed consent, confidentiality, and ethical clearance from IRBs are all key ethical considerations. Informed consent is an essential ethical principle that requires participants to be advised at the very beginning of the research and to do their best to ensure that they are fully aware of the research issues and the possible risk of participation before agreeing to participate. Again, confidentiality is paramount here since it assures study subjects of privacy and protection from exposure and harm due to the research (Kapp, 2006; Horowitz, 1977; Van Delden & Van Der Graaf, 2017). An IRB or equivalent entity must usually approve human

studies as research subjects to protect subject rights. The IRB approval signifies that the study has been reviewed for compliance with ethical research guidelines, which protect participants' rights and welfare. Such oversight is needed across many fields, including biomedical (Horowitz, 1977), social (Resnik, 2019) and AI research (Koepsell, Brinkman, & Pont, 2015).

For instance, CIOMS and the Declaration of Helsinki have issued ethical guidelines to ensure the responsible conduct of research. This highlights the importance of scientific and social value (especially in low-resource settings) and describes further conditions regarding the involvement of vulnerable groups (van Delden & Van Der Graaf, 2017; Koepsell, Brinkman, & Pont, 2015). Additionally, in areas such as AI and citizen science, established ethical guidelines may fall short in dealing with new challenges, including questions of participatory design or the dual roles of participants as both object and researcher. This calls for contextual ethics frameworks focusing on these different challenges (McKee, 2023; Resnik, 2019).

4.2. Data

The study analyzed responses from 500 employees. Tables below summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and key variables.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Male/Female)	300/200	60%/40%
Age (20-30/31-40/41+)	150/200/150	30%/40%/30%
Position (Staff/Manager/Executive)	250/150/100	50%/30%/20%

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Psychological Empowerment	4.2	0.8	1-5
Structural Empowerment	4.0	0.7	1-5
Ethical Behaviour	4.3	0.6	1-5
Organizational Culture	4.1	0.5	1-5

Hypothesis

H1: Psychological empowerment positively influences ethical Behaviour.

H2: Structural empowerment positively influences ethical Behaviour.

H3: Empowerment mediates the relationship between organizational culture and ethical Behaviour.

4.3. Hypothesis Discussion

H1: Psychological Empowerment Positively Influences Ethical Behaviour

Psychological empowerment comprises an individual's perceived meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact on their role. These hypotheses propose that employees who feel psychological empowerment make ethical decisions. Regression analysis results indicate a significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and ethical behaviour. The results corroborate the work of Spreitzer (1995), who suggested that psychological empowerment brings about feelings of responsibility and moral courage among employees, which ensures that they can respond effectively to ethical dilemmas.

The qualitative interviews also found that empowered individuals frequently alluded to an increased sense of accountability and ethical obligation in their roles

H2: Structural Empowerment Positively Influences Ethical Behaviour

Structural empowerment: availability of systemic resources, information, and authority to the employee. This theory proposes that structural empowerment gives employees the resources and power to do the right thing. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between structural empowerment and ethical behaviour ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). Individuals belonging to organizations possessing strong structural empowerment practices demonstrated increased capabilities for making better decisions and ensured ethical conformance.

This finding aligns with Kanter (1993), who theorizes that structural empowerment drives employees' motivation for optimal and ethical performance.

H3: Empowerment Mediates the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Ethical Behaviour

Empowerment mediates the relationship between organizational culture and ethical behaviour. Our regression analysis indicates that the mediation effect is significant ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). An organizational culture with values like transparency and accountability sets the foundation for empowerment initiatives. Employees empowered in such cultures have greater chances to become ethical.

These findings support Schein's (2010) claim that organizational culture is a major determinant of employee behaviour and empowerment as a significant mediating factor in converting cultural values into ethical actions.

4.4. Data Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta Coefficient	p-value
Psychological Empowerment	Ethical Behaviour	0.45	<0.01
Structural Empowerment	Ethical Behaviour	0.38	<0.01
Organizational Culture (mediated by Empowerment)	Ethical Behaviour	0.22	<0.05

5. Discussion

Empowerment plays a crucial role in fostering ethical behaviour within financial organizations. Psychological empowerment enhances employees' confidence to tackle ethical dilemmas, while structural empowerment provides the necessary tools and resources. Empowerment also mediates the relationship between organizational culture and ethical behaviour, promoting a transparent and integrity-driven work environment.

Psychological empowerment is a significant factor in linking ethical leadership with positive employee outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behaviour and innovative work behaviour. It boosts employees' confidence and motivation, enabling them to address ethical challenges effectively (Dust et al., 2028; Shah & Hussain, 2022; Sattar et al., 2020; Abuzaid et al., 2024). Providing employees with decision-making authority and autonomy can enhance their ability to act ethically. This empowerment is linked to improved competitiveness and profit-oriented behaviour in financial services (Nielsen & Pedersen, 2003; Gandz & Bird, 1996). Empowerment mediates ethical leadership and positive employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and innovative behaviour. This mediation underscores the importance of empowerment in translating ethical leadership into practical, ethical actions by employees (Shah & Hussain, 2022; Sattar et al., 2020; Qing et al., 2020; Abuzaid et al., 2024). Empowerment helps bridge the gap between formal ethical standards and actual practices, fostering a culture that values ethical behaviour. This involves creating opportunities for discourse, rewarding ethical behaviour, and establishing a learning culture (Fichter, 2018; Chun et al., 2013).

6. Conclusion

Empowerment is a major driver of ethical conduct in financial institutions. The integration of psychological and structural dimensions will allow organizations to foster an environment where employees are not only motivated but also equipped to act ethically. In this research, you highlighted the need for creating an organizational climate that encourages empowerment, which, in turn, leads to transparency and accountability.

The research adds to the empowerment and ethics literature by offering a more finely grained understanding of the mechanisms that underlie ethical behaviour in financial organizations. It also provides practical implications for a manager who wants to cultivate an ethical climate. Training programs, tools, and decision-making autonomy should reflect society's role and empower employees.

The study contributes to the work on ethical behaviour within organizations and also to our individual understanding of the role of empowerment by highlighting the longitudinal links between empowerment and ethical behaviour, delving into whether empowerment is universally applicable, and considering some of the potential challenges to implementing empowerment Initiatives in organizations. This analysis will also benefit cross-sectoral studies, enriching our understanding of empowerment's role in driving ethical standards in different sectors.

7. Future Research Suggestions

Longitudinal Analysis of Empowerment's Impact: Future studies could adopt longitudinal research designs to examine the sustained impact of psychological and structural empowerment on ethical behaviour over time in financial institutions.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Investigate how empowerment influences ethical behaviour across different cultural contexts or countries, especially between Eastern and Western financial systems, to explore cultural moderating effects.

Digital Empowerment and Ethical AI Usage: Examine the role of digital empowerment and the integration of AI tools in supporting ethical decision making, particularly in financial institutions undergoing digital transformation.

Sectoral Expansion beyond Finance: Extend the conceptual framework to other high-stakes sectors such as healthcare, education, or public administration to test the generalisability and sector-specific adaptations of empowerment strategies.

Role of Leadership Styles in Empowerment Efficacy: Examine how various leadership styles (example: transformational, servant, ethical leader) interact with empowerment practices to impact ethical conduct and organizational citizenship.

Appendix: Additional Data Analysis

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Psychological Empowerment	1.00	0.72	0.65	0.60
2. Structural Empowerment	0.72	1.00	0.58	0.66
3. Ethical Behaviour	0.65	0.58	1.00	0.70
4. Organizational Culture	0.60	0.66	0.70	1.00

Declarations

Source of Funding

This study received no external funding.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study. The research was independently conducted without any external influence from financial organizations or stakeholders that could compromise its objectivity and integrity.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

Informed Consent

Not applicable.

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